

## POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE HUNGARIANS IN BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC CZECHOSLOVAKIA

by

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Following World War I, the rights of nationalities living in other countries were guaranteed by the so called minority treaties, in addition to the peace treaties, forming part of the general arrangements. While the peace treaties made with the defeated states contained nationality-protecting paragraphs, some of the victorious states, such as Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Yugoslavia guaranteed the free development of minorities living in their country through special international agreements. As a result, the nationality question became not only a question of home policy but a matter of foreign affairs as well. The treaty regulating the rights of the nationalities in Czechoslovakia was signed by the latter and the Powers of the Entente at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 10, 1919.<sup>1</sup>

The makers of the peace system of Versailles had to effect the corrections expressed in the minority treaties for compensating the violation of the principle of free self-determination. At the peace conference, this system of minority protection was insisted upon by the delegation of the United States, by President Wilson first of all; its practical implementation was carried out by France<sup>2</sup>.

This system affected mainly the states which had large German and Hungarian nationalities. It was Czechoslovakia which belonged to these states first of all. The problem the new Republic had to cope with consisted not in denying the minorities these possibilities, although, as we shall see, various attempts were made to curtail these rights as far as possible. The greatest danger was that Germany and Hungary, on the basis of this contract and on the pretext of protecting the Germans and Hungarians — for which bourgeois Czechoslovakia often gave occasion, to be sure — would interfere with the country's affairs with the aid of the League of Nations, with the domestic affairs of a country whose existence they called into doubt and whose crushing they were seeking.

What did this treaty of Saint Germain contain? First and foremost, Czechoslovakia undertook not to pass statutes, decrees or measures against the nationality rights outlined in the treaty. (Article 1.). As concerns concrete regulation, the starting-point was this: „La Tchéco-Slovaquie

s'engage à accorder à tous les habitants pleine et entière protection de leur vie et de leur liberté sans distinction de naissance, de nationalité, de langage, de race ou de religion". (Art. 2)<sup>3</sup>. Here we must call attention to the fact that personal liberty was due not only to the citizens of Czechoslovakia, but to all inhabitants of that country alike. We must pay attention to this because — as we shall see — the treaty made substantial distinctions between the inhabitants of the country and Czechoslovak citizens.

Articles 3–6 regulated exactly this question. Czechoslovak citizenship was granted to all individuals, without any formality and automatically, whose registered domicile belonged to the territory of Czechoslovakia. The same applied, in the second place, to all persons who were born in this territory, to those whose parents had their registered domicile in Czechoslovakia, even if they were not residents of Czechoslovakia at the time when the treaty came into force. In the third place, the mere fact of having been born in Czechoslovakia guaranteed citizenship validly to all to whom no other citizenship was due by virtue of birth. At the same time these persons had the right of option (after the age of 18, and with the wife's status following the husband's), i. e. could claim other citizenship open to them<sup>4</sup>.

The third type of acquiring citizenship was conditional on the approval of the victorious state. This form was not contained in the treaty of Saint Germain, but was regulated in the Peace Treaty of Trianon. According to the pertinent paragraphs, those who acquired registration of domicile after January 1st, 1910, in a territory that belonged to Czechoslovakia later on, were granted citizenship only with the consent of the Republic. This right of consent was due only to the victorious states<sup>5</sup>.

We had to discuss the problems of citizenship in some detail because subsequent paragraphs guaranteed nationality rights only to citizens of the state, and this amounted to a certain restriction in itself. This is the case also — as we shall see — with several bourgeois-democratic and nationality rights laid down in the Czechoslovak constitution and language acts.

In certain respects, the treaty of Saint Germain recognized also the collective right of minorities; this applied to the full extent to the Carpathian Ukraine, where the Ukrainians were granted territorial autonomy (Art. 10–13)<sup>6</sup> which, however, was never carried into effect by the Czechoslovak governments. Hence this treaty guaranteed *the individual, personal liberty* to every Hungarian living in Czechoslovakia, the *individual* and partly *collective nationality rights* to every citizen of Hungarian nationality.

What were these *individual* nationality rights? Equality before the law, equal civic and political opportunities (no discrimination of citizens belonging to a national minority was permissible in giving employment, filling up offices, dignities, in pursuing trade, etc.), extensive right of using one's language, teaching in the mother-tongue.<sup>7</sup> The partially collective rights were laid down in Articles 8 and 9 of the treaty. „Les ressor-



tissants tchéco-slovaques, appartenant à des minorités ethniques, de religion ou de langue, jouiront du même traitement et des mêmes garanties en droit et en fait que les autres ressortissants tchéco-slovaques. Ils auront notamment un droit égal à créer, diriger et contrôler à leurs frais des institutions charitables, religieuses ou sociales, des écoles et autres établissements d'éducation, avec le droit d'y faire librement usage de leur propre langue et d'y exercer librement leur religion". (Art. 8) And in the towns and districts where nationalities of Czechoslovak citizenship lived in considerable proportions, „... se verront assurer une part équitable...“ „... qui pourraient être attribuées sur les fonds publics par le budget de l'État, les budgets municipaux ou autres, dans un but d'éducation, de religion ou de charité" (Art. 9)<sup>8</sup>. The restricted nature of the collective right was manifest mainly in the fact that these provisions dealt only with the citizens living in certain towns and districts, and not with the entire, rather compact nationality territory.

The Republic acknowledged the fact that the above-defined rights relating to the nationalities were under the protection of the League of Nations, and could not be altered without the majority consent of the Council of the League. Czechoslovakia also agreed that each member of the Council should have the right to call the Council's attention to the violation of these obligations: „... et que le Conseil pourra procéder de telle façon et donner telles instructions qui paraîtront appropriées et efficaces dans la circonstance. „In case of differences in opinion, Czechoslovakia agrees that the dispute " sera considérée comme un différend ayant un caractère international... " (Art. 14), and that it must be brought before the Permanent Court<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the intervention of the Council limited Czechoslovakia's sovereignty beyond doubt.

The aforesaid guarantees of the treaty of Saint Germain are contained not only in this agreement, but can be read in a more or less similar formulation also in the treaties made with the other victorious and defeated states<sup>10</sup>.

How did this minority-protective system operate in fact? Here we must start from the circumstance that, the big powers which created this system had failed to size up the consequences of the treaties, the resulting role and obligations of the League of Nations. Namely the bourgeois states, including Czechoslovakia, were not willing to perform their contractual obligations in respect of the nationality rights which were guaranteed also in their respective constitutions and various provisions of law (this will be discussed in the Czechoslovak relation later on). And the bourgeois politicians of the minorities, the Hungarians of Slovakia among them, put irredentist slogans on their banners, relying on Germany and Hungary. It is an indisputable fact, to be sure, that there was universal discontent among the nationalities of countries. As a consequence, the League of Nations was over-showered with masses of complaints and warnings, and this organization had to expand its apparatus dealing with minority questions as a result.

The procedure was usually as follows: the submitted petition or memorandum was examined by the Secretary General to decide whether it can be accepted, and, if so, it was considered by the permanent minority committee of the Council. The procedure was completed by this discussion in the committee. Pursuant to the minority guarantee treaties, member states of Council had the right, in addition, to place on the agenda — in the form of a warning — the discussion of a given question, which then was referred to a three-member ad hoc committee, irrespective of the meetings of the minority committee. There was also possibility of proceedings before the Permanent Court, but this was seldom resorted to. Pursuant to a resolution passed by the Council in March, 1929, the governments of which it was ascertained that they had violated the treaty, had to be contacted with a memorandum of friendly wording, and had to be moved by the minority department to find a satisfactory solution or to supply further information.

Yet disputes arose between the interested states as soon as such a complaint was submitted. Czechoslovakia, for instance, took it amiss that the petitions and memoranda submitted by the minorities were put before the various committees without the opinion of the government of the country in question. This objection was formulated as a suggestion, and this Czechoslovak motion was accepted in June 1921; the Secretary General therefore requested the comments of the governments concerned, and the complaint was discussed in the minority committee only afterwards; the case was then referred to the Council<sup>11</sup>.

It is not possible here, of course, to go through the grievances submitted by the nationalities of Czechoslovakia, we only wish to present a few examples. An early complaint was submitted by the Hungarian-Ruthenian Political Party on September 10, 1921. This party — which was not identical with the Sub-Carpathian Hungarian Legal Party headed by Endre Korfáth and oriented towards the Hungarian population — was under Hungarian bourgeois leadership but claimed representation of the national interests of the Ukrainians. It did so by feeding on the traditions of the dualistic era when the Ukrainians had still less of an independent national movement than the Slovaks, when the Ukrainian intelligentsia surpassed the Slovakian in abandoning Ukrainian national aspirations and joined forces with the Hungarian government. This party comprised the Magyarized Ukrainian elements and — following the Hungarian irredentist intention just as in the case of the Slovak autonomy — threw light in a detailed memorandum upon the undisputable fact that Czechoslovakia had violated the treaty of Saint Germain and had not granted the Ukrainians their autonomy. Paying regard to the opinion of the Czechoslovak government, the minority committee — in a report sent to the Council — expressed its confidence in the government of Czechoslovakia and stressed its conviction that autonomy would be granted according to the treaty in the territory of Czechoslovakia in the future.<sup>12</sup>

The Hungarian and German parties of the opposition in Slovakia and the Carpathian Ukraine submitted a petition to the League of Nations



in April 1923, and enumerated in it the complaints of the minorities — mainly Hungarian — living there. This memorandum contained the following actual grievances to which we shall revert later on: problems of Czechoslovak administration, minority statistics, of contacts with state agencies, schooling, cultural, economic questions. The Czechoslovak government tried to refute the complaints by giving detailed reasons. The petition and the reply was made known to the League of Nations by the Secretary General.

Soon afterwards, a complaint relating to the Czechoslovak agrarian reform was sent to the League of Nations by representatives of German and Hungarian opposition parties of the Czech and Slovak territories. Attacking this reform sharply, they emphasized that persons of the minority were excluded from the implementation of the reform, that there was a discrimination between Czech and minority territories, that forced sales and colonization were resorted to in the latter, and that these minorities were excluded from getting their share of land. And even if the national motivation of this land reform, which hit the German and Hungarian population hard, cannot be disputed, this petition was mainly intended to protect the interests of the landowner class, last but not least by requesting suspension of the land reform since it was contrary to the treaty of minority protection. The Secretary General of the League of Nations forwarded the petition to the Czechoslovak government in October 1924, and in its reply the government stressed the following: "... an investigation into concrete data shows that the cases in question were presented distorted and without any accuracy, and that they do not prove at all that minority rights should have been violated. Thus the allegations of the petition are lacking all conclusive proof." The Secretary General referred both the petition and the reply to the members of the Council.

In April 1925, members of the Hungarian opposition parties in the Czechoslovak house of representatives brought it up that, contrary to the treaty, the government does not grant Czechoslovak citizenship to Hungarians who are entitled to it. The matter was dealt with in similar ways as the former<sup>13</sup>.

The counterrevolutionary Hungarian government came forward at the League of Nations with questions of greater import and more general aspects, as well as with procedural suggestions. At the VIth session of the League the Hungarian delegation suggested, among others, to recognize national minorities as legal persons, i.e. to ensure them full collective rights. The Hungarian government requested further that consideration of complaints and petitions should not take after the preliminary hearing of the government of the country concerned, and requested therefore to revoke the decision passed on the basis of the Czechoslovak suggestion of June 1921. Finally, the Hungarian government suggested to hear the representatives of the minorities. These demands were rejected most resolutely by the Czechoslovak delegation.

Late in the 1920's and early in the 30's, the procedural disputes about the consideration of petitions and memoranda continued between the states opposing one another, and were just as unfortunate polemics as the investigation and discussion of the grievances and complaints<sup>14</sup>.

All these examples illustrate clearly — in respect of Czechoslovakia — the failure of the minority-protection policy. The incessant attacks of the bourgeois parties of the Hungarian opposition (although they were often based on actual grievances) and the defensive and rigidly negative attitude of the government only resulted in a sharpening of differences, while the League of Nations was impotent it could not, and actually did not want to, bring about decisions of real value.

The crisis of the minority-protecting policy, closely interrelated with the peace system of Versailles, became even more manifest at the time of the fascist sweep. The efforts aimed at maintaining a system that did not work proved to be altogether futile at that time. The fascist states were gathering strength, and although they pursued the policy of a cruel oppression of minorities in their countries, they pleased themselves in the role of the protectors of minorities in the public opinion. And even if we do not forget for a moment the often gravely wrong nationality policy of the Czech bourgeoisie, we now can agree basically with Beneš who wrote in the days before the Republic was crushed: the fascist countries present themselves as the protectors of minorities and abuse cynically the democratic liberties which were granted, for example, also by Czechoslovakia to its nationalities, and for serving the purposes of their unjust revisionist policy, they exaggerate in international public opinion the insignificant domestic problems of the country<sup>15</sup>.

As time passed, the grave shortcomings of the minority-protecting system became increasingly evident; but large-scale scientific activities began nevertheless in this respect, mainly in the field of international and comparative law. Scientific institutions concerned with the nationality question came into being, periodicals were published, and growing research — depending on the country pursuing it — supplied the conceptions of opposed states with argument material.

Since the of Versailles elevated the minority question to the international level, and this problem was handled as a political affair by the treaties, some non-official international organizations assumed special importance. Their importance became manifest in the shaping of an international legal theory, in the development of projects, and in the influencing of the minority-protecting system. Such non-official organizations were the following: the Congress of National Groups Organized in European States (Kongress der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas), the Federation of the Friendly Societies of the League of Nations (L'Union des Associations pour la Société des Nations), the Interparliamentary Union, the International Law Association, the latter having special committees and groups which studied nationality problems.<sup>16</sup>



Apart from the international guarantees, the status of national minorities, including the Hungarians in Slovakia, was determined much more by the internal conditions of the given state, by the statutes and decrees influencing national development of the minorities. The status of the Hungarians in Slovakia was regulated by numerous prescriptions ranging from those of general bearing to the special ones, to measures relating to districts, villages or individuals. The basic documents were the constitution of the Republic, and the language act.

Before examining these in detail, we must stress the well-known fact the constitution of Czechoslovakia was a bourgeois-democratic constitution which granted more liberties to the Hungarian population than were granted to the great majority of the Hungarian people by the counterrevolutionary Horthy regime. If we disregard the short period of the Károlyi government and the Hungarian Soviet Republic, it appears that, in respect of bourgeois liberties, the Czechoslovak bourgeois democracy gave the Hungarians more than any other system under which they lived, even if we take into account that the Hungarians there had lost their nationally advantageous position and were affected most adversely by many a measure in this respect.<sup>17</sup> The representatives of the various progressive tendencies in counterrevolutionary Hungary were — contrary to the official irredentism and to public opinion — fully aware of this important fact. The confessions of Zsigmond Móricz are characteristic in this respect and may be regarded as symbolic. During his travels in Czechoslovakia, he was greatly impressed by the young Hungarians among whom he emphasized the effect of the atmosphere of the bourgeois democracy that differed from Hungary. He called them "Hungarians with a new face", pointed out their "more social and more cultured" Hungarian traits. This youth acted on him as revelation, on "Frater Julianus" who discovered them<sup>18</sup>.

The bourgeois-democratic system of Czechoslovakia — which impressed its marks also on national opportunities — differed from the system of Roumania and Yugoslavia in a favourable sense. This bourgeois democracy created a better situation for the Hungarians in Slovakia than the Hungarians had in the two other neighbouring states. Paragraph 1 of the Czechoslovak constitution adopted on February 29, 1920, enacted that the sole source of state power in the Republic is the people, and that legislative power shall be exercised by the national assembly (parliament) consisting of the house of representatives and the senate. Elections shall take place on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage. Yet in respect of voting and eligibility (the right of voting for representatives was due from the age of 21, for senators from the age of 26, eligibility was from the age of 30 and 45 respectively) there was a restriction which was not negligible as concerned the Hungarian minority: it was citizenship. Similarly to the treaty of Saint Germain, the constitution guaranteed personal freedom and civic democratic liberties to all inhabitants resp. citizens of the country, irrespective of national, ethnic and religious differences,<sup>19</sup>.

As concerns the minority rights, it was a point of attack that, contrasted to the treaty of Saint Germain, the constitution contained sentences of restrictive effect, and omitted important provisions of the treaty. For example minority rights were only guaranteed "within the limits of the general laws" and it was added that "all this does not affect the rights of the state organs which are due to them by virtue of both valid and the laws to be passed for maintaining public order, the security of the state, and efficient supervision." The first sentence of Article 8 of the treaty of Saint Germain „*Les ressortissants tchéco-slovaques...*"), which stresses the equality of rights of the nationalities clearly, was not included in the constitution, it was only stated that "on the basis of rights and reality ... they are equal to the other Czechoslovak citizens."

The following restrictive passage is inserted in several paragraphs of the constitution: "within the limits of general laws and regulations." The constitution held out the prospect of passing a language act as its own organic constituent part, as well as the framing of further statutes for guaranteeing universal liberties and the protection of nationalities. It was promised, too, that Article 9 of the treaty of Saint Germain would be implemented by a special decree of enforcement. Said Article provided that the minorities must have an equitable share in the budgetary allocations for educational, religious and charitable purposes. Thus the constitution contained the rightful claims, but these were never enforced because the special regulations failed to come about. This was the case also with the other statutes mentioned; with the exception of the language act, these were never passed.

These striking shortcomings and contradictions were constantly kept on the agenda by the oppositionist Hungarian parties and by the delegations of counterrevolutionary Hungary at various bodies, including the League of Nations. The Czechoslovak government rejected such criticism — as soon as the constitution was enacted — saying that it protects the sovereignty of the state in this way<sup>20</sup>.

We cannot leave unmentioned a highly remarkable passage of the constitution which reflects clearly the appearance of the bourgeois-democratic principle in the nationality question: "... no forcible method of denationalization is permissible. Elusion of this principle may be qualified as punishable under the law" (may, and not must!). The restrictive formulation of this important principle is typical of a bourgeois democracy, just as the declaration of the principle proper, namely the declaration — and this is again characteristic of a bourgeois democracy — did not yet mean the enforcement of this principle in reality<sup>21</sup>.

Glorification or depreciation of the constitution would be unfair. Basically, it provided for a democratization of life which had no counterpart in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. We must not forget at the same time now the constitution came into being, how it was launched: it was nothing else but the stabilization of the bourgeois system, a reflection of the fact that the Czech bourgeoisie succeeded in preventing the bourgeois revolution from transforming into the socialist revolution<sup>22</sup>.



The language act was part of the constitution. Its starting-point was the enactment of Czechoslovak as the official language, and this was based on an actually non-existent Czechoslovakism which refused to recognize the Slovaks as a nation.<sup>23</sup> Needless to say, this fact was nothing less than declarative, because Slovakian was, and continued to be, the vernacular in Slovakia for the most part.

It is interesting to note that the right-wing Christian Socialist opposition, which had an eye to Hlinka's Popular Party not without an ulterior motive, took sides with the Slovaks in connection with the establishment of the Czechoslovak official language. The cunning remarks in parliament of the landowner Lajos Körmendy-Ékes hardly concealed the well-known anti-Czech autonomist conception: "We simply do not know" he said on January 28, 1921, — "which language we should learn, the Czech or the Slovak, since the Czechoslovak language declared as the official language of the state does not exist. I should gladly learn Slovakian which I have taken to my heart, but I have nothing in common with the Czech language, and so I feel no sympathy with it. But when we see that in the Slovak territory the language of administration is the Czech everywhere ... then we are at a loss what to do in this question"<sup>24</sup>.

In the parliamentary preamble to the language bill — turning now to the minority rights — reference is made to the treaty of Saint Germain, to the provision that the national existence, the opportunities of cultural improvement, must be guaranteed to the minorities, that "the ways for asserting their language rights must be looked for and found."

Paragraph 2 of the Act provided in this respect as follows: "The courts, offices and other authorities of the Republic whose area of operation comprises court districts in which — according to the latest census — at least 20% of the citizens living there speak the same language differing from the Czechoslovak, shall in every matter they have to deal with in such district accept petitions in the language of the minority, and shall attend to such petitions not only in the Czechoslovak, but also in the other language, i.e. the language of the petition." This meant practically that Czechoslovak, as the official language of the state, was valid in all districts, but in districts where the ratio of citizens belonging to some nationality was 20% (and in this instance we must again stress the concept of citizen, and not inhabitant) bilingualism of the authorities could be requested. This paragraph also defined the cases in which official action had to be only in the minority language, and laid down the principle that public notices of courts, offices and authorities could be published also in the language of the minorities.

Paragraph 3 guaranteed all this also for the various organs of self-government. We should like to mention in this connection that the language to be used in the debates of the National Assembly was dealt with by several acts of parliament (325/1920, 205/1922, 88/1933). Paragraph 49 of the first act passed on April 15, 1920, reads as follows: "The representatives shall deliver their speech in the Czechoslovak language. The German, Russian (Ukrainien), Hungarian or Polish nationality representative-

es, if they do not wish to use the Czechoslovak language, may speak the language of their nationality."<sup>25</sup>

Numerous government decrees were issued on the enforcement of the language act. The decree published on January 31, 1924, determined the languages to be used in assemblies of county representatives and committees. The decree coming into force on February 3, 1926, implemented the language act in the sphere of the various ministries. And the government decree published on December 29, 1928, determined the languages to be used in self-governing districts. All these decrees were based on the 20% ratio. As a consequence of changes in the census data — these had several reasons, and the machinations of the bourgeois democracy were not absent from them — the 22 rural districts of Slovakia where 20% or more Hungarians were living were somewhat reduced in number after 1930.

This reduction resulted in the limitation of nationality rights in some districts. Among the decrees on the enforcement of the language act, decree no. 1928/229 deserves special mention: it provided that in the field of administration — if more than 50% of the citizens in the district belong to nationalities — the various documents written in the official language of the state must be translated into the minority language in question. And if this ratio was over 75% — in bourgeois circumstances this was a measure of special significance, although there was a way out as well — the documents did not have to be published in the official language in addition, unless there was request to this effect (and there always was, of course)<sup>26</sup>.

Paragraph 5 of the basic language act dealt with the language of teaching in schools; in the schools set up for the national minorities, teaching was in their language, and the administrative language of their cultural institutions was the same. This general principle was regulated by laws and decrees. The act published on April 3, 1919, was governing for primary, higher elementary, and private schools; on a three-year average it prescribed at least 40 schoolable children for organizing primary schools, and 400 for higher elementary schools. Teaching was in the mother-tongue of the pupils. The act did not tie the hands of the minister of education in respect of higher elementary schools: in case of "weighty reasons" he was free to decide differently. Quite naturally, this could have been of advantage to the nationalities as well; but needless to say, it was rather disadvantageous. Yet this act did not come into force in Slovakia, the necessary enforcement decree was never published, and this was detrimental not only to the Hungarian, but to the whole school system in Slovakia.

The secondary schools and the teachers' training schools were regulated by an act published on June 8, 1923. It provided that the official language of the state must be taught as a compulsory subject in these schools.

In addition to regulations relating to schools, there were decrees and laws that regulated the establishment and operation of public libraries,



school administration, activities of school boards, etc. All these affected also the Hungarians to a greater or lesser extent.<sup>27</sup>

What has been presented in the foregoing offered a lot of opportunities for national development. But the rights guaranteed on the paper often failed to become practice, and — as we have seen — laws and decrees, or even the constitution itself, frequently offered means and ways for eluding these rights.<sup>27/a</sup> Were it not for Czechoslovakia being a bourgeois democracy at that time, the equality of rights could have become reality for the minorities. Still, it cannot be denied that it was easier to fight for codified rights, and this was more promising as well, than a struggle which could make no reference to established statutes. The status of the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia took a more favourable turn also in this respect than that of the Hungarians in Yugoslavia and Roumania.

If we wish to make a general survey of the practice in Czechoslovakia, we must first turn our attention to the early years of that state, to the period preceding the constitution, when — as a result of various Czechoslovak decisions — the formerly ruling Hungarian nation was reduced to a status of minority, and placed in a disadvantageous position. What were these decisions? The formation of the new state was organically intertwined with the mass dismissal of Hungarian civil servants, with their exclusion from the right to retirement pay. Yet in this connection we cannot leave unmentioned several important facts. The overwhelming majority of the Hungarian civil servants refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new state, many of them were gentries of antidemocratic feelings; owing to their chauvinism, their human attitude, to the spirit prevailing among the officials of old Hungary — which it was difficult to get rid of — they were not fit for satisfying the demands of a modern bourgeoisie. We must further emphasize — and this was a bed worry for Czechoslovak administration — that not more than 304 civil servants of Slovakian mother-tongue were active at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Despite of the mass dismissal of Hungarian officials, there were 21 of Hungarian nationality among the high-ranking county officers in the four Hungarian-inhabited counties before 1923. No county lieutenants and councillors, to be sure, but there were county clerks and chief constables among them.<sup>28</sup>

This process was associated with the overall suspension of the self-governing bodies that had developed at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Czechoslovak authorities dissolved the county, district and village boards of representatives, and put their place, for a while, government commissioners and appointed councils. The churches shared a similar lot: the properties of the Catholic Church were managed by a state organ, the autonomy of the Protestant Churches was abolished and they were placed under the administration of government commissioners. The same happened to the chambers of commerce and industry, to the chamber of lawyers, to sick-relief organizations. Many economic societies were prohibited temporarily.

A somewhat favourable tendency began in respect of the bodies of local representatives after the elections of 1920; and there was a change in the case of the church some years after: the Protestants — although they had grievances — regained their autonomy, the Catholic Church recovered right of disposal over their own estates. And even if there were attempts at driving back the Hungarian influence in the Christian churches — this was easiest among the Lutherans since about 30% of the Slovaks followed this faith — their activities of nationality nature were basically not hindered. Church societies, organizations were operating in large numbers, they had schools where teaching was in Hungarian (elementary schools, a few grammar schools, teachers' training schools, seminaries), and had a press of considerable influence. But the various chambers and sick-relief organisations were left without autonomy all through; and although the influence of the Hungarians in these institutions grew again after some years, the government maintained its positions — which it had gained after the formation of the new state — also in the territories of decisive Hungarian majority since it did not restore their autonomy. (In the Czech territories of the country, these organisations had their autonomy all the time).

It was connected with the formation of Czechoslovakia — and was a transitory state — that the constituent national assembly which operated before the parliamentary elections of April 1920 had no nationality, i.e. Hungarian members. The Germans insisted on representation, but were refused. And this constituent assembly framed fundamental statutes of great importance, the constitution first of all.

As concerns the following years of the Republic, a measure taken in 1922 was a grave wrong to the Hungarians: several corporate towns were reduced to the administrative status of large villages. This affected thirty-five boroughs and towns in Slovakia and the Carpathian Ukraine. Only Pozsony (Bratislava) and Kassa (Košice) in Slovakia, and Ungvár (Užhorod) and Munkács (Munkačevo) in the Carpathian Ukraine continued as corporate towns in this way. This step, although it affected quite a number of towns with a Slovak majority, reduced the Hungarian influence first of all owing to the fact that the towns had a considerable number of Hungarian inhabitants. Although it must be admitted that many of these towns were surrounded by territories with a compact Slovak population<sup>29</sup>.

It would us lead too far if we investigated how these Hungarian enclaves had taken shape, how far this was due to natural historical development, or to the Magyarization in the 19th and 20th centuries which did not refrain even from forcible methods. We knew from the Czechoslovak memoranda submitted to the peace conference — and this was the standpoint of the Slovak and Czech national movement already in the era of the Dual Monarchy — that the new state assessed this historical development solely as forcible interference which had to be reversed since this was an ethical demand and was suggested also by the interests of the nation.<sup>30</sup> And if we pass a harsh judgment on such measures of Magyar-



ization, we must condemn Czechoslovakia likewise for the steps taken resolutely and consistently for the aforesaid reasons, and not without result as a matter of fact. Nor can it be denied that in these territories of a mixed population — which, however, were preponderantly Slovak territories — there were many people among the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who had been intimidated in the time of the Monarchy, or who abandoned their Slovak nationality for the sake of their career, but still spoke their mother-tongue and were tied with many bonds to their Slovak nation. It is commonly known, too, that in the Dualistic Era the situation of the Slovak national movement — which could not rely on glorious historic antecedents and had to fight hard for its mere existence — was extremely difficult, and therefore the reversal of this process was considered as doing historic justice to them. The bourgeois leaders of the new state believed — if not admittedly — that if they failed to interfere with the course of development the innervations of many decades might consolidate, even increase, the Hungarian enclaves in the compact Slovak territories. Despite all this, and adding that the first unjust and forcible measures had been taken by the Hungarian ruling class, there is no justification for carrying out the drastic measures of the Dualistic Era the other way around. This is contradicted by the bourgeois-democratic ideals Czechoslovakia professed, and by the human demand that vengeance cannot bring the long desired peace and understanding for the much-suffered peoples of East Europe. Let us mention already here that, following the Vienna Award, also Hungary's ruling circles retaliated the wrongs done to the Hungarians, and this process of vengeance did not stop for three years following the liberation in Czechoslovakia either<sup>31</sup>.

Returning to the territories of mixed population, and the period following 1918: the forcible steps in respect of a town, Eperjes (Prešov), are presented convincingly in the memories of János Gömöry, a democratic-minded grammar school teacher. The methods employed here were not unique, they characterized the policy pursued in similar towns of Slovakia. Otherwise the development of territories with a mixed population, of nationality islands, was typical of entire East Europe, and attempts at liquidating them were made by the bourgeois governments of the ruling nations everywhere, now by drastic, now by more refined methods. Needless to say, this is no excuse for the policy of the Czechoslovak governments which tried to promote assimilation through the aforesaid administrative measures (degradation of towns), through the restriction and prohibition of the use of Hungarian, mainly through the Slovakization of schools, immediate abolition of Hungarian as the language of teaching, dissolution of Hungarian cultural organizations. In the territories of a mixed population, all this was supported by the language act: it laid down the 20% ratio for rural districts (not for villages and towns), i.e. the use of the minority language in question was granted only if the nationality population reached that ratio; however, the Hungarian inhabitants of the towns concerned, being within the districts of the Slovak ethnic groups,

did not reach this ratio. Hence one restriction in the language act was the indisputable fact that it contained no provisions in respect of the considerable sporadic groups.

One argument of the Slovaks against the Hungarian language of teaching was that it cannot be tolerated because all lessons of Hungarian literature and history cause great damage to the Czechoslovak conception of the state. It was a frequent argument, too, that "if we, the Slovaks, were able to preserve our language for thousand years, also the Hungarian should do their best to preserve theirs despite the deprival of their schools and culture.,<sup>32</sup>

We have discussed the Hungarian sporadic ethnic groups in some detail because, ever since the usual arguments at the peace conference, the favourite topic the Czechoslovak authorities and public opinion was the stressing of the reciprocity of the Slovaks in Hungary and the Hungarians in Slovakia,<sup>33</sup> although the localization of the Slovaks in Hungary, their sporadic groups, showed much semblance with these Hungarian enclaves. This is by no means to say that we intend to excuse counter-revolutionary Hungary, quite the contrary. If the Horthy regime has not resorted to drastic steps comparable with the foregoing, this may be explained by the fact that there was simply no need for it. The nationalities in Hungary, including the Slovaks, — and this was a fundamental difference — did not know the literary language of their nation, and their national self-consciousness — if there was any — was on a very low level. The cultural policy of Hungarian governments was aimed at pushing the process of Magyarization, resulting from the sporadic nature of the nationalities (the Slovaks) and from the lack of national self-consciousness, and in doing so they did not refrain from forcible means. So there was hardly anything these two states could reproach each other; only the position of counterrevolutionary Hungary proved to be easier, even if we disregard the territories of compact Hungarian population in Slovakia, and think only of the sporadic Hungarian ethnic groups there: Hungarian governments had to deal with nationalities belonging to the peasant stratum for the most part, having no bourgeois strata, having never had a national movement, and being on the way to Magyarization.

One feature of the nationality policy of the Czechoslovak governments was the territorial arrangement of the constituencies, which hit all Hungarian territories badly. Although franchise was universal, direct, and secret, the constituencies were marked out in such a way that — in addition to the requirement of Czechoslovak citizenship — while in 1920 an average of 19 753 votes was required for a seat in parliament in the territories of Slovak population, this figure was 27 697 for voting into parliament a Hungarian representative, i.e. it was more by nearly 8 thousand, or 40%. The situation in the Czech territories was still more favourable for this policy. And since in South Slovakia the social-democratic left wing (and the communist later on) had a greater influence, this electoral geometry pushed back not only the right-wing Hungarian parties but also the revolutionary labour movement. The situation was similar



also in respect of the seats of senators. The number of votes for seating a senator was 73 949 in Prague, was 105 504 at Érsekújvár (Nové Zámky), and 143 007 in the Carpathian Ukraine.

The circumstance that 100 signatures were required in the Czech territories for nomination, and 1000 in Slovakia — to be attested by the county authorities — was another discrimination.

As concerned the bodies of representatives for administrative units, the electoral returns were corrected by the government in its own interest by appointing representatives to these bodies from among the parties of the government coalition. The same applied to the bodies of provincial representatives established in 1928. Such provincial autonomies were formed in the Czech territory, in Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and the Carpathian Ukraine. After the two elections (December 1928, and May 1935), there were only 36 elected, but 18 appointed among the 54.

The rural districts to replace the former six counties (1923–1928) were established at the same time; bodies of representatives, made up of 18 to 16 members was appointed by the government similiary to the provincial bodies.

Hence the Hungarian opposition parties did have elected representation in these bodies; but there was evidently none among the appointed members.

It goes without saying that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had no appointed representatives in parliament, and that numerous communist of Hungarian nationality were to be found in the self-governing bodies of the Hungarian population.

We have referred repeatedly to the 20% ratio of nationalities in the language act. Machinations similar to those in the demarcation of the constituencies are seen also here. Namely the division of the rural districts (and, earlier, of the counties) was based on a scheme that reduced, as far as possible, the number of districts where the nationality population could reach the ratio required for using the minority language. In the case of the Hungarians, the long, narrow frontier territory extending from west to east — the principal Hungarian-inhabited area — was split up mainly into long, narrow districts extending from south to north, and the number of Hungarians in these administrative units was reduced thereby as a matter of course. The districts namely extending from south to north connected territories of Slovak population with Hungarian regions. The Hungarians here were put in a disadvantageous situation as early as the 20's among others in the districts of Pozsony, Kassa, Rimaszombat, (Rimavská Sobota), Nitra (Nyitra) and Gálszécs (Sečovce); there being no 20% nationality ratio, the Minister of Justice prohibited the use of Hungarian there. The Supreme Administrative Court declared this decree to be contrary to law only in the case of the Rimaszombat district, but this brought no change because the returns of the later census of 1930 showed a lower ratio than before.

It has been mentioned repeatedly how great a role citizenship played in the guarantee of minority rights. The Hungarians were therefore hit

hard by a decision of the Supreme Administrative Court in 1923 which interpreted the right of registered domicile in a restricted sense concerning Slovakia and the Carpathian Ukraine: it provided as the precondition for acquiring this that right the person interested, or his father, must be admitted to the civil parish in question by a decision put on record not later than in 1906, and excluded thereby the possibility of the tacit acquisition of this right which, however, was guaranteed in the treaty of Saint Germain. The consequence was that the certificates of domicile of thousands of Hungarians, who already were in possession of recognized citizenship, were annulled. And although between 1926 and 1930 citizenship was granted to thousands every year, the number of stateless or alien Hungarians in Slovakia and the Carpathian Ukraine had grown by 1930 by about 10 000 (from 10 000 to 20 000) compared to the census in 1921. These problems surrounding citizenship gave rise to uncertainty, and affected particularly pensionable persons. It even happened that the government, fairly often, refused to grant citizenship to persons who had met their obligation to serve in the Czechoslovak army<sup>34</sup>.

Considering the practice of administrative and political life, it can be laid down as a fact that the methods employed in this respect in the other two countries were still more drastic. In Yugoslavia, for example, the electoral law of 1920 disfranchised masses of Hungarians. Contrary to Czechoslovakia – even Roumania – the Hungarian Party which had just managed to exist up to 1929 was not able to run for elections independently in Yugoslavia. The three Hungarian representatives seated in parliament in 1927 were running on the ticket of the Serbian Radical Party.<sup>35</sup> In bourgeois Roumania, the citizenship act of 1924 was a violation of political and human rights; it had much graver consequences for the Hungarians in Transylvania than the comparable Czechoslovak measures for the Hungarians in Slovakia. And although the motive was similar in Roumania, this act denied hundreds of thousands of Hungarians the citizenship. And from the early thirties, in the years of crisis and a swing to the right, Hungarian workers and employees were dismissed en masse, and when racism began to make headway, Hungarians were drafted for military and forced-labour service, there was forced subscription to the war-loan, there was violence and incessant harrassing. To use nationality languages, including Hungarian, was prohibited in the administration, or was practically impossible. A language act, like that of Czechoslovakia, often critized with good reason, was out of the question in Roumania.<sup>36</sup>

As concerns cultural life, we must first consider the schools. The Czechoslovak governments pursued a nationality educational policy similar to that of the dualism, but in the opposite sense as a matter of course. The denominational and village primary schools in the Hungarian regions, inherited from the past regime and rather neglected, were left more or less intact, but well-equipped state schools with Slovak as the language of teaching were established to make these schools of the state attractive to Hungarian parents. Since the Hungarian schools were



hardly developed, they — including the secondary schools — were overcrowded, and the government did not care much about building schools where teaching was in Hungarian. A special social organization, the Slovenská liga, was formed which cared not only for the Slovaks in Hungary, but also made efforts for providing more and more Slovak schools in the Hungarian territories of Slovakia. The operations of the Slovenská liga followed the example of the Magyarizing social organization of the Dualistic Era, of the Cultural Society of Upper Hungary (FEMKE), which was patterned after the Prussian Ostmarkvereine for Germanizing the Poles.

The insufficient support by the Czechoslovak state was only one factor in the inadequacy of the Hungarian school network (the extremely small number of the Hungarian kindergartens was especially conspicuous); the natural attraction to the ruling nation also a role. A relatively large number of Hungarian parents sent their children to Slovak schools for acquiring the official language of the state, considering their future career. The right-wing Hungarian parties estimated the number of Hungarian children attending Slovak schools at 14 000. It should be noted in this connection that in fifteen communities with a 75% Hungarian majority there were only Slovak primary schools.

Between 1921 and 1926, the number of Hungarian higher elementary schools decreased by 5,3% while similar schools grew by 12,4% in the entire country. The number of pupils in higher elementary and secondary schools of Czech and Slovak language was more than fifty times higher than the number of pupils in the same types of school where teaching was in Hungarian, although it appears from the returns of the Czechoslovak census in 1921 that the Czechoslovak population was only nine times larger than the Hungarian minority.

These data — which had extremely disadvantageous consequences — also comprised the deplorable fact that, after 1918, three important grammar-schools were closed down in Hungarian-populated territories, in the towns of Léva (Levice), Rozsnyó (Rožňava) and Ungvár. The educational policy of the bourgeois-democratic state was clearly characterized by fact that no teachers of Hungarian nationality were active in educational administration — ranging from ministry to the district school inspectorates — that not one Hungarian State operated grammar-school was headed by a Hungarian headmaster, that part of the teachers active in Hungarian elementary, secondary, schools and teachers' training schools were not Hungarians, and that Hungarian teachers — again as a consequence of a purposeful policy — were assigned to Slovak and Carpatho-Ukrainian schools. Another great shortcoming of Hungarian teaching in Slovakia was the fact that, except for theology, there was no establishment of higher education with Hungarian as the language of teaching. Summing up: the number of Hungarian schools was lower by 31% than it ought to have been on the basis of the official census returns.<sup>37</sup>

Contrary to the schools, the Hungarians in Slovakia had a very extensive network of cultural associations. True, the Czechoslovak govern-

ments upheld several ministerial decrees dating from the Dualistic Era, from the 70's of the last century, which, consolidated the privileged status of the ruling nation. But between the two World Wars these decrees had their repercussion on the Hungarians and impaired the unfolding of cultural life to some extent; one decree of the Hungarian minister of the interior, for example, gave ample opportunity for rejecting new by laws in this field. Yet, basically, the bourgeois-democratic system did not hinder after all the foundation and extensive activity of cultural societies, let alone political organizations which were permissible like-wise <sup>38</sup>.

If a comparison is made between the educational systems, the Czechoslovak democracy appears in a somewhat favourable light. It must be kept in mind that schools are of fundamental importance in the life of minorities, that teaching in the mother-tongue is the most decisive factor in the survival of any nationality. So it was not by chance that oppressive measures were aimed at these institutions which constituted a firm basis for the minorities. The pan-Serbian chauvinism did all in its power to wear away the schools of Hungarian language. The governments assigned a considerable proportion of the Hungarian teachers to Serbo-Croatian schools, and there was practically no training of Hungarian teachers at the same time. Bilingual teaching was introduced, and children with a non-Hungarian name but of Hungarian mother-tongue were not permitted to attend Hungarian schools. In Roumania, the act of 1924 was intended to shut the doors of primary schools to Hungarian children through a similar method of name-analysis as in Yugoslavia. Namely it was left to the headmasters of the Roumanian state schools to determine the child's nationality on the basis of its name, and to approve or refuse admission to the Hungarian primary schools. And the secondary final examination act of 1925 made possible to fail Hungarian students en masse: they had to sit for examination in towns alien to them, before boards who spoke no Hungarian, without interpreters in many cases; it was tried to bar Hungarians from further studies in this way. It was prescribed by the Roumanian educational authorities that history, geography and principles of constitutional law must be taught in Roumanian even in Hungarian schools. The bourgeois Roumanian governments created in the nationality territories the so-called cultural zones where teachers excelling in their "national" endeavours of Roumanization were given special reward. The term "cultural zone" comprised the notion that Roumanian represents the higher culture, and that through denationalization, through spreading the western culture, the Roumanians fulfil a noble mission in this way.

"Re-Roumanization" became a favourite thesis of this oppressive national ideology: it was emphasized that the *Székely* (i.e. the Hungarians living in North-East Transylvania) were originally Roumanians and that, therefore, they must be led back to their original national community. The chauvinistic Roumanian governments availed themselves of the assistance of the Greek Orthodox Church for this purpose, and a cultural organization – called *Astra* – was intended to serve the Roumanization of the *Székely* through considerable subsidies. This conception was not



unknown in Slovakia either, but more moderate means were employed for carrying it through, mainly in territories of a mixed population.

All this was a cultural policy that pointed beyond the walls of the school, and naturally, made felt itself in all fields. The theatre act of 1926 permitted only performances in Roumanian in state theatres. The showing of Hungarian sound-pictures was prohibited on the plea that Hungarian does not belong to the group of "universal culture languages". Apart from the school, there were numerous difficulties in other cultural fields in the way of Hungarian development in the voivodeship in Yugoslavia as well.<sup>39</sup> Hence, compared with Yugoslavia and Roumania, there were no educational measures in Czechoslovakia that would have been overtly discriminating to the Hungarians; and even if, despite all this, Hungarian cultural life was not negligible in two other countries, it never reached the dimensions seen in the Czechoslovak Republic, not to speak of political organizations.

Returning now to Czechoslovakia, we must draw our conclusions. The right-wing Hungarian parties ascribed the doubtless and not insignificant decrease of the Hungarian speaking territories to the aforesaid nationality policy of the government first of all. Of what extent was this decrease actually?

Year	number of villages with Hungarian inhabitants			
	total	fully Hungarian	Hungarian majority	Hungarian minority
1918	818	671	76	71
census of 1921	805	651	94	60
census of 1930	760	556	149	55

As concerns details, the most significant changes — proceeding from west to east — were the following: 1. The minority nature of Pozsony ceased. 2. The double peninsula extending from Verebély was detached from the Hungarian linguistic area and became thereby a single, major enclave. 3. With the disappearance of Bátorfalu north of Szlovákgyarmat, the western major Hungarian block was split into two, and the closed Hungarian linguistic area was thereby divided into three separate parts. 4. Cessation of the minority nature of Kassa, and the complete absorption of the surrounding minor enclaves. In the case of the sporadic Hungarian groups, decrease may be estimated at 8 to 50%, in the case of the closed block at 5 to 8%. Loss calculated in absolute figures during 9 years, comparing the two censuses, was 62 839 people<sup>40</sup>.

This decrease of the Hungarian population by about 10% cannot be ascribed with simplifying arguments mainly to a policy of assimilation. This is a complex question whose chief components are the following: 1) The consolidation of the new state — apart from its nationality policy — attracted the petty bourgeois and intellectual elements of Slovak origin which earlier declared themselves Hungarians, but had not yet abandoned completely their nation and were orienting themselves towards the new state and nation after the collapse of the dual monarchy. 2) The departure from Czechoslovakia of the former civil servants of the Monarchy coincided with this period. 3) Nor was emigration negligible, it involved more than 8 thousand Hungarians between 1922 and 1927. 4) The inclusion of the Jewish population in the census of 1930 had a more intense effect than in 1921. In 1928, many persons of Jewish faith (70 929 of 135 914) declared themselves to be of Jewish nationality. 5) The same applies to the gipsy population, and this reduced the number of Hungarians too. 6) The above-mentioned difficulties of acquiring citizenship also acted in the direction of decrease. 7) Nor can assimilation be excluded in the territories of mixed population, mainly in the major towns (Pozsony, Kassa). But this was a natural rather than artificial assimilation, or, more exactly, we may speak of a mingling of these phenomena.

All this is not to be construed as an excuse for the nationality policy of the Czechoslovak governments; the fact is that it was not possible to assimilate such a great mass in the given short time, let alone that there is no possibility for denationalizing a compact population. At the same time, the grave shortcomings of the nationality policy we have presented resulted in a further sharpening of the nationality hostilities.

In studying the changes of a linguistic territory, one must consider the birth and mortality rates. Population increase in the Hungarian rural districts between 1923 and 1936 was as follows:

Name of district	1923	1924	1927	1930	1932	1936
Somorja	18.30	—	13.18	16.77	13.55	12.58
Dunaszerdahely	15.90	17.19	12.93	12.80	12.44	10.36
Komárom	16.95	11.31	10.20	9.59	8.21	7.25
Galánta	19.69	16.72	15.69	15.65	13.42	9.15
Vágsellye	17.61	15.62	12.35	14.72	9.46	7.84
Ógyalla	16.78	12.22	12.05	12.78	14.05	9.38
Párkány	14.77	9.31	7.78	8.12	5.90	1.53
Zseliz	10.05	6.45	1.01	5.95	1.86	1.84
Tornalja	15.44	11.89	11.48	6.09	8.55	5.33
Szepsi	19.32	15.60	13.27	15.00	11.86	9.22
Királyhelmece	19.86	20.91	17.42	17.40	13.75	8.96
Nagykapos	18.92	11.69	—	14.53	14.48	10.17
Beregszász	22.78	17.17	13.81	17.35	13.29	8.80



It appears from these figures that population increase was the highest in 1923, and that an abrupt decrease started in 1924.

From 1926, national figures are also available and the increase in the Hungarian population can be compared with the similar data on the other nationalities of Czechoslovakia.

Year	Czecho- slovak	Ukrainian	German	Polish	Jewish	Hunga- rian
1925	25.26	44.87	20.40	42.30	23.36	28.30
1926	24.88	42.63	19.77	35.28	33.45	26.97
1927	23.63	41.48	18.56	33.23	21.01	25.71
1928	23.44	43.13	18.52	31.28	22.36	25.64
1929	22.61	41.62	17.77	30.37	21.39	24.06
1930	22.95	43.26	17.72	32.91	22.31	24.26
1931	21.20	41.34	17.33	30.84	24.35	27.37
1932	20.70	40.80	16.67	29.54	22.21	26.52
1933	19.04	36.57	15.26	25.08	20.68	23.74
1934	18.41	35.87	14.85	23.72	19.98	22.11
1935	17.40	35.60	13.80	21.30	18.50	22.06
1936	17.18	34.57	13.69	19.81	18.63	21.56

This comparison shows that the birth rates of the Hungarian nationality were favourable in the Czechoslovakian relation; and we may add that they were better than the average in Hungary.

The same cannot be said of the mortality rates:

Year	Czecho- slovak	Ukrainian	German	Polish	Jewish	Hunga- rian
1925	15.19	21.60	14.09	19.35	12.14	16.31
1926	15.42	23.31	14.38	19.39	12.88	16.75
1927	15.91	24.93	14.75	18.77	12.69	16.65
1928	15.19	20.90	13.88	18.38	11.87	15.90
1929	15.41	20.51	14.85	18.16	11.86	15.46
1930	14.15	20.10	13.23	16.01	10.88	14.04
1931	13.95	19.96	13.88	18.80	12.88	17.42
1932	13.69	20.23	13.67	17.87	13.13	16.72
1933	13.28	15.84	13.48	16.71	12.76	15.84
1934	12.92	17.94	12.75	16.38	12.65	15.11
1935	13.00	17.60	13.30	15.90	13.10	15.10
1936	12.95	14.41	12.95	14.98	13.20	14.71

If we deduct the mortality rate from the birth rate, we obtain natural increase; and it may be termed as average:<sup>41</sup>

Nationality	under the age of 14, in %	under the age of 40, in %	over the age of 40, in %
Czechoslovak	29.46	70.96	29.04
Ukrainian	37.98	77.47	22.53
German	26.67	67.75	32.25
Polish	33.20	74.99	25.01
Jewish	35.11	67.84	32.16
Hungarian	31.04	71.83	28.17

The picture we have drawn of the situation of Hungarians in Slovakia was rather negative, and we have called attention to a wrong policy; yet we must not forget — and have hinted at this — that the bourgeois-democratic system offered certain opportunities nevertheless. Needless to say, a bourgeois system cannot bring a solution to this problem: it is not sufficient to ensure opportunities, equality on the paper, to the nationalities which are necessarily in a disadvantageous position: they must be assisted, and their rights — frankly spoken — must not be curtailed as was the case with the Czechoslovak bourgeois democracy whenever it was in a position to do so. Quite the contrary, more than an equality of rights ought to have been given them in order that the national minorities be able to make up for their inevitable disadvantages. But was not the only cause why, Czechoslovakia did not become Switzerland where the opportunities offered by a bourgeois democracy could be exploited by the various nations also because of the fact that the economic level of that country was more or less uniform; Czechoslovakia could not follow this course, last but not least because revanchist Germany and Hungary stood in the background. The inconsistent and mistaken nationality policy of this bourgeois democracy, and the fear of these states amplified one another, and all this was detrimental chiefly to the numerous Hungarian masses in Slovakia.

The difference in the economic level of the various parts of Czechoslovakia, the great advantage of the Czech bourgeoisie resulting from historical development, prevented not only the realization of equality guaranteed on the paper, it also was based on the ruling position of the Czechs. And the economic-nationality policy hitting entire Slovakia, including the territories of Hungarian population, only enhanced this advantage and superiority further.<sup>42</sup> And it is at this point where if we compare the situation of the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and in the other two neighbouring countries, Czechoslovakia, contrary to the other points discussed, appears in a less favourable light (economic oppression was of course practised also in Yugoslavia and Roumania, needless to say). This may be explained by the fact that the Czech bourgeoisie held obviously stronger positions than the comparable Roumanian and Serbo-Croatian class. The difference between the economic strength of the Czech and the Hungarian ruling classes was greater in Czechoslovakia than in the other two countries. Retardation of the economic development in Slovakia and the



Hungarian territories had particularly grave consequences on the proletarian and peasant masses. But an investigation into this question calls for special studies.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For antecedents see the work of counterrevolutionary spirit which presents numerous documents on Hungarian—Czechoslovak relations: *Breit, J.*: A magyarországi 1918—1919. évi forradalmi mozgalmak és a vörös háború története (History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Movements of 1918—1919, and of the Red War), Budapest, 1925. vol. I—III. From the Czech bourgeois point of view this is discussed by *Peroutka, F.*: Budováním státu. Československá politika v letech popřevratových (Establishment of the State. Czechoslovak Politics in the Years after the Change the year 1919), Prague, 1934, pp. 1103—1105. A Marxist summary of the subject based on rich material by *L. Nagy, Zs.*: A párizsi békekonferencia és Magyarország (The Paris Peace Conference and Hungary), 1918—1919. Budapest, 1965.
- <sup>2</sup> The question was summed up from the point of view of the Hungarian counterrevolutionary system by university professor *Buza, L.*: A kisebbségek jogi helyzete. A békeszerződések és más nemzetközi egyezmények értelmében (The Legal Situation of the Minorities in the Sense of the Peace Treaties and Other International Agreements). Budapest, 1930. The stand taken by bourgeois-democratic Czechoslovakia was explained by university professor *Peška, Z.*: Národní menšiny a Československo (National Minorities and Czechoslovakia), Bratislava, 1932. pp. 73—118. The Marxist point of view was worked out by *Rehák, L.*, a Hungarian author living in Yugoslavia, a noted expert of the nationality problems of that age, in his book: A kisebbségek Jugoszláviában (The Minorities in Yugoslavia), Novi Sad, 1967; his work is of a broad European horizon. See pp. 65—90. And there is an excellent Slovak Marxist summary by *Purgat, J.*: Od Trianonu po Košice. K maďarskej otázke v Československu (From Trianon to Košice. A Contribution to the Hungarian Question in Czechoslovakia), Bratislava, 1970. pp. 11—18.
- <sup>3</sup> The original French text and its Hungarian translation is presented by *Baranyai, Z.*: A kisebbségi jogok védelmének kézikönyve (Handbook of the Protection of Minority Rights), Berlin, 1925. pp. 28—29.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29—33.
- <sup>5</sup> *Peška, Z.*: Československá ústava a zákony s ní související (Czechoslovak Constitution and the Laws in Connection with it), Parts I and II, Prague, 1935. pp. 84—86, 137—138, 806—875.; *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. p. 20.
- <sup>6</sup> *Baranyai, Z.*: op. cit. pp. 36—39.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33—34.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35—37.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38—41.
- <sup>10</sup> Text (in French and Hungarian) of the treaties concluded with the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian State) at Saint-Germain-en Laye, and in Paris with Roumania), *ibid.* pp. 62—107. A summary of the minority protection system is given by *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. pp. 18—24. Cf. *Buza, L.*: op. cit. pp. 63—93. Further, by the same author: Kisebbségi nyelvek szabad használatát a magánéletben a kisebbségi szerződések szerint (The Use of Minority Languages in Private Life Pursuant to the Minority Treaties). Jancsó Benedek Memorial Volume, Budapest, no date, pp. 203—215.; *Ajtay, G.*: A kisebbségek nemzetközi jogvédelme (International Protection of Minority Rights), *ibid.* pp. 216—228.; *Szász, Zs.*: A kisebbségi jogvédelem fejlődésének útján (Development in the Protection of Minority Rights), *ibid.* pp. 229—234.
- <sup>11</sup> *Rehák, L.*: op. cit. pp. 82—83, 88.; *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. pp. 25—28. In the question of minority protection, there were constant diplomatic communications, full of serious controversies between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Cf. Státní ústřední archiv (Central State Archive, Prague, SÚA Praha hereinafter), Předsednictvo Ministerské rady — PMR (Presidency of the Council of Ministers) 1921—1938, no. 216. Diplomatické styky s Maďarskem, informace a jednání s Maďarskem v ochraně maďarských minorit v ČSR (Diplomatic Relations with Hungary, Information and Negotiations in Defence of the Hungarian Minorities in Czechoslovakia).

- <sup>12</sup> *Baranyai, Z.*: op. cit. pp. 265–266.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 265–266, 272–275, 284–285.
- <sup>14</sup> *Peška, Z.*: op. cit. pp. 118–125.
- <sup>15</sup> *Beneš, E.*: *Demokracie dnes a zítra* (Democracy To-day and To-morrow), Prague, 1964, pp. 234–236. Cf. *Stodola, E.*: *O menšinách a o samospráve* (On the Minorities and on Self-Government), Prague–Prešov 1938, pp. 50–53.
- <sup>16</sup> *Rehák, L.*: op. cit. p. 86.
- <sup>17</sup> For the characteristics of the bourgeois-democratic minority policy, see *Arató, E.*: *Csehszlovákia története* (The History of Czechoslovakia), Budapest 1967, 5th unchanged reprint, pp. 123–125.
- <sup>18</sup> *Móricz, V.*: *Apám regénye* (The Story of my Father), Budapest 1955, pp. 293, 351, 370.; *Vargha, K.*: *Adalékok Móricz Zsigmond csehszlovákiai útjaihoz és kapcsolataihoz* (Contributions to Zsigmond Móricz's Journeys and Connections in Czechoslovakia), Irodalomtörténet (Literary History), 1957. Vol. 3. pp. 313–336.
- <sup>19</sup> The constitution and the pertinent statutes were published and commented upon by the aforesaid *Peška, Z.*: *Československá ústava a zákony s ní související* (Czechoslovak Constitution and the Laws in Connection with it), pp. 166–169, 173–194.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 295–298, 324–330 (quotations are on the latter pages). The above criticisms on the bourgeois-democratic constitution is emphasized also by *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. pp. 33–35.
- <sup>21</sup> The quoted edition of the Czechoslovak Constitution, pp. 330–331.; see also *Bianchi, L.*: *Československá republika ako buržoáznodemokratický štát – historicko-právny pohľad na roky 1918–1938* (Czechoslovak Republic like a Bourgeois-Democratic State – a Historico-Judicial View on the Years 1918–1938), *Právnické štúdie* (Judicial Studies), 1968, vol. 3. pp. 509–545.; *Turczel, L.*: *Két kor mezsgyéjén. A magyar irodalom fejlődési feltételei és problémái Csehszlovákiában 1918 és 1938 között* (In the Borderland of Two Eras. Developmental Conditions and Problems of Hungarian Literature in Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1938), Bratislava 1967, pp. 20–21.
- <sup>22</sup> *Přehled československých dějin 1918–1945* (An Outline of Czechoslovak History 1918–1945), Part III, Prague 1960, pp. 62–138.
- <sup>23</sup> *Gosiorovský, M.*: *K niektorým otázkam vzťahu Čechov a Slovákov v politike Komunistickej strany Československa* (A Contribution to Some Questions of the Relation between Czechs and Slovaks in the Policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), *Historický časopis* (Historical Review), 1968, vol. 3. pp. 354–406.; *Holotiková, Z.*: *Slovenská otázka a KSČ za predmnichovskej republiky. Slováci a ich národný vývin* (The Slovak Question and the KSČ during the Republic before Munich. Slovaks and their National Development), Bratislava 1969, pp. 246–268.; *Barto, J.*: *Riešenie vzťahu Čechov a Slovákov – 1944–1948* (Solution of the Relation between Czechs and Slovaks – 1944–1948), Bratislava 1968.; *Arató, E.*: *A cseh-szlovák föderáció történeti előzményei* (Historical Antecedents of the Czech-Slovak Federation), *Valóság* (Reality), 1970, no. 1., pp. 36–47.
- <sup>24</sup> On the basis of the parliamentary shorthand reports quoted by *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. p. 37.
- <sup>25</sup> Quoted edition of the Czechoslovak Constitution, pp. 1768–1804 (for quotations see pp. 1769 and 1774); *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. p. 38.
- <sup>26</sup> Quoted edition of the Czechoslovak Constitution, pp. 1804–1872; *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. p. 39. For the general features of the language act and the language question, see SÚA Praha, PMR 1921–1938, nos. 463–465.; 1919–1938, nos. 3295–3296.; *Presidium Ministerstva vnitra – PMV* (Presidency of the Ministry of the Interior) 1925–1930, nos. 214–216.; *Ministerstvo vnitra – MV* (Ministry of the Interior) nos. 2763–2807, 5375–5400, 5427–5480, 13365–13370.; *Štátný slovenský ústredný archív Bratislava* (Slovak Central State Archive, ŠSÚA, hereinafter), *Minister s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska – MsPM* (Minister with Full Power, for the Governing of Slovakia) 1925, no. 834. For some elements of the language question (registration, use of language in courts, offices), see SÚA Praha, PMR 1921–1922, no. 230.; ŠSÚA Bratislava, MsPM 362. prez. II. 1922. 4–3769. no. 66.; 1924, no. 719. Complaints of the right-wing parties about the use of language: SÚA Praha PMR 1921, no. 268.
- <sup>27</sup> Quoted edition of the Czechoslovak Constitution, pp. 1792, 1722–1768.; *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. pp. 39–41. On Hungarian schools see further SÚA Praha, PMR 1922–1938,



- no. 229.; MV nos. 5401–5426, 7210–7238, 11005.; ŠSÚA Bratislava. MsPM 387. prez. VI. 1923, nos. 109, 111.; 404. prez. VI. 1924. nos. 2107–5072, 148.
- <sup>27/a</sup> In addition to the constitution, the language act and various decrees, the government took steps for regulating its nationality policy through instructions issued to authorities for internal use. ŠSÚA Bratislava, Presidium Krajského úradu – PKU (Presidency of the Territorial Office) 1932–1937, no. 180.; 1935–1938, no. 219.
- <sup>28</sup> *Darvas, J.*: Politikai életünk húsz éve. Magyarok Csehszlovákiában 1918–1938 (Twenty Years of Our Political Life, Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938). Edited by *Borsody, I.*: Az ország útja, 1938, June, p. 58.; *Lipscher, L.*: K vývinu politickej správy na Slovensku v rokoch 1918–1938 (A Contribution to the Development of Political Governing in Slovakia in the Years 1918–1938), Bratislava 1966, pp. 67, 69–70, 72–73, 77–78.
- <sup>29</sup> *Darvas, J.*: op. cit., *ibid.*, pp. 59–60.; On the Churches, *ibid.*, pp. 7–22. Cf. *Lipscher, L.*: op. cit. p. 51.
- <sup>30</sup> *Gogolák, L.*: Cseh emlékiratok a békekonferencia előtt (Czech Memoranda Presented to the Peace Conference), Magyar Szemle (Hungarian Review), May–August, 1938, pp. 190–200. It is evident from the date of publication that this report served the purposes of irredentism and was based on the German edition of 1937, but the Czechoslovak-nationalistic contents of the memoranda cannot be disputed either.
- <sup>31</sup> *Tilkowszky, L.*: Revízió és nemzetiségpolitika Magyarországon (Revisionism and Nationality Policy in Hungary), Budapest, 1967, pp. 13–143.; same author: Južné Slovensko v rokoch 1938–1945 (South Slovakia in the Years 1938–1945), Bratislava 1972, p. 219.; *Zvara, J.*: A magyar nemzetiségi kérdés megoldása Szlovákiában (Solution of the Hungarian Nationality Question in Slovakia), Bratislava 1965, pp. 22–69.; *Arató, E.*: A csehszlovákiai magyarok helyzete a felszabadulás után (Situation of the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia after the Liberation), Kortárs (Contemporary), 1970. November, pp. 1799–1805.
- <sup>32</sup> *Gömöry, J.*: Emlékeim egy letűnt világról (My Memories of a Bygone World), Budapest 1964, pp. 114–132 (quotation on page 121).
- <sup>33</sup> The different features of the Slovaks in Hungary and the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia (not sporadic groups) were summed up most effectively by *Deme, L.*: Nyelvi és nyelvhasználati gondjainkról (Our Worries of Language and the Use of Language), Bratislava 1970, pp. 271–282.
- <sup>34</sup> *Darvas, J.*: op. cit. Magyarok Csehszlovákiában 1918–1938 (Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938), pp. 60–61, 71.; *Szatkó, P.*: A visszatért magyarok (The Hungarians that Returned). A felvidéki magyarság húsz éve (Twenty Years of Hungarians in Upper Hungary), Budapest 1938, pp. 40–42, 46–47.; *Tarján, Ö.*: A magyar kisebbség osztályrésze a csehszlovák demokráciából (The Share of Hungarians in Czechoslovak Democracy), Prague 1930, pp. 9–11, 47–50.; *Lipscher, L.*: op. cit. pp. 114, 169, 227–232.
- <sup>35</sup> *Bajza, J.*: Jugoszlávia (Yugoslavia), Budapest 1929, p. 53.
- <sup>36</sup> *Csatári, D.*: Román – magyar kapcsolatok. Történelmi vázlat (Roumanian – Hungarian Relations. A Historical Outline), Budapest 1958, pp. 123–125.; same author: Forgószélben – Magyar – román viszony 1940–1945 (In the Whirlwind, the Hungarian – Roumanian Relations, 1940–1945), Budapest, 1968, p. 18.; *Szenczei, L.*: A magyar – román kérdés. Történeti és politikai tanulmány (The Hungarian – Roumanian Question. A Historical-political Study), Budapest, no date, pp. 132–139.; *Szász, Zs.*: Románia kisebbségi politikája (The Minority Policy of Roumania), Magyar Szemle (Hungarian Review), June 1938, pp. 361–371.; *Mikó, I.*: Huszonkét év (Twenty-two Years), Az erdélyi magyarság politikai története 1918. december 1-től 1940. augusztus 30-ig. (The Political History of the Transylvanian Hungarians from December 1, 1918, to August 30, 1940), Budapest, pp. 99–100, 130–131, 159–161, 177–179.
- <sup>37</sup> *Turczel, L.*: op. cit. pp. 38–49.; *Fizély, I.*: A magyar iskola. Magyarok Csehszlovákiában (The Hungarian School. Hungarians in Czechoslovakia), 1918–1938, pp. 108–118.; *Duka Zólyomi, N.*: Az asszimilálódás (The Assimilation), *ibid.*, p. 49.; *Tarján, Ö.*: op. cit. pp. 16–19, 21–22. The Hungarian school policy of bourgeois-democratic Czechoslovakia is reviewed critically also by *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. pp. 41–48.
- <sup>38</sup> *Turczel, L.*: op. cit. pp. 50–63. The favourable features were acknowledged even by the Hungarian oppositionist right wing, since a large-scale activity is revealed in this

field by *Sziklay, F.*: *Kulturális szervezkedésünk története. Magyarok Csehszlovákiában 1918–1938* (The History of Our Cultural Organizations. Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938), pp. 93–108.

- <sup>39</sup> *Fekete, L.*: Magyar kisebbség Jugoszláviában (The Hungarian Minority in Yugoslavia), *Magyar Szemle* (Hungarian Review), February 1938, pp. 186–196.; September, pp. 95–96, 388–391.; *Csatári, D.*: Román–magyar kapcsolatok (Roumanian–Hungarian Relations), pp. 126–128.; same author: *Forgószélben* (In the Whirlwind), pp. 18–19.; *Szenczei, L.*: op. cit. pp. 136–139.; *Makkai, L.*: Magyar–román közös múlt (Hungarian–Roumanian Common Past), Budapest 1948, pp. 261–263.; *Barabás, E.*: A magyar iskolaügy helyzete Romániában (Hungarian Educational Affairs in Roumania) 1918–1940/41. *Kecskemét* 1944, pp. 3–35.
- <sup>40</sup> *Révay, I.*: A demográfia tükrében. Magyarok Csehszlovákiában 1918–1938 (In the Light of Demography. Hungarians in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938), pp. 30, 32.; *Varga I.*: A statisztika tükrében (In the Light of Statistics), *ibid.*, p. 39.; *Duka Zólyomi, N.*: op. cit. *ibid.*, p. 51.
- <sup>41</sup> *Purgat, J.*: op. cit. pp. 29–31.; for statistical tables see *Varga, I.*: op. cit. pp. 40–48. Last table in *Janics, K.*: A szlovákiai magyar társadalom ötven éve (Fifty Years of the Hungarian Society in Slovakia), *Valóság* (Reality), 1971, no. 6, pp. 20–21. For numerical data on the Jews, see *Jócsik, L.*: *Idegen igában* (Under Foreign Yoke), Budapest, pp. 200–202.
- <sup>42</sup> *Arató, E.*: op. cit. (History of Czechoslovakia), pp. 115–117.; *Csatári, D.*: op. cit. (Roumanian–Hungarian Relations), pp. 124–126.; *Szenczei, L.*: op. cit. pp. 139–142, *Makkai, L.*: op. cit. pp. 259–260.; *Rehák, L.*: op. cit. pp. 174–179.
- Author's remark:* The reader may perhaps find it curious that we have referred also the Hungarian literature of irredentist spirit (the works of *L. Buza, Z. Baranyai, Ö. Tarján, P. Szvatkó, J. Bajza, E. Barabás*, Hungarians in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938, studies in the János Benedek memorial volume, articles of *Magyar Szemle* – Hungarian Review – etc., etc.) Yet, naturally, we have at the same time made use of the data and conclusions of Czechoslovak bourgeois writings of the opposite sense (*F. Peroutka, E. Beneš, Z. Peška, E. Stodola*). This confrontation provided possibility for cutting off exaggerations appearing at both sides. We have at the same time taken into account also the conception of the Czechoslovak Communist Party which criticized the government's nationality policy sharply. This unbiassed Marxist point of view, being in conformity with the facts, also emphasizes the reality of the facts we have presented. Cf. in this connection the stand taken by the CKP on the nationality question: *ŠSÚA Bratislava. Policajné riaditeľstvo prez.* (Presidency of the Police Directorate) 273, no. 77/11. Territorial Office P. IV. kom. no. 7509/37. Further, *Arató E.*: Magyar–csehszlovák demokratikus és munkásmozgalmi kapcsolatok a második világháború előtt. Új adatok az 1937-es esztendő mozgalmából (Hungarian–Czechoslovak Democratic and Labour-Movement Relations Prior to World War II. New Facts about the Movements of 1937), *Párttörténeti Közlemények* (Communication of the History of the Party), 1973, no. 3, pp. 3–16. The same applies to Yugoslavia and Roumania: see *Rehák, L.*: op. cit. pp. 180–189.; *Csatári D.*: op. cit. (Roumanian–Hungarian Relations), pp. 132–160.; same author, op. cit. (In the Whirlwind), pp. 21–25. One of the fateful tragedies of bourgeois-democratic Czechoslovakia was the fact that it put a sing of equality between the communists and the right-wing Hungarian parties (This appears convincingly from the pertinent rich material of the Slovak Central State Archive) Cf. in this connection the following archival inventories *Bielik, F.*–*Sopko, J.*: Minister s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska 1919–1927 (Minister with Full Power for the Governing of Slovakia 1919–1927), Bratislava 1964.; *Sopko, J.*–*Barczyorá, E.*–*Urbanovič, J.*: *Policajné riaditeľstvo v Bratislave 1920–1945* (Police Directorate in Bratislava 1920–1945), Bratislava 1961–1962. Nevertheless it hardly needs proof that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, including quite a number of Hungarians in Slovakia, tried to defend the Republic against the Third Reich and counterrevolutionary Hungary through an uncompromising fight against national oppression, through guaranteeing the emancipation of the nationalities. And the right-wing Hungarian parties, in sharp contrast to this conception, tried to crush bourgeois-democratic Czechoslovakia through maintaining the policy of grievances as the question of the day.